

'Need for Speed' Sequel in the Works With EA, Chinese Partners

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A sequel to last year's *"Need for Speed"* is in the works, with the same Chinese partners that helped Paramount make *"Transformers: Age of Extinction"* teaming up with Electronic Arts in hopes of co-producing.

Much of *"Need for Speed 2"* would be filmed in China, with the nation's actors also taking significant roles, according to an announcement of the new arrangement by joint venture partners China Movie Channel Program Center, Jiaflix Enterprises and 1905 Pictures, along with Electronic Arts, creator of the *"Need for Speed"*

videogame.

The partnership can not proceed until it negotiates to secure rights to a sequel, which are currently held by DreamWorks. Those talks have not yet begun, according to a studio representative.

The first *"Need for Speed"* effort featured *"Breaking Bad"* star Aaron Paul and, despite mostly poor notices from American critics, performed decently in the U.S. and broke out worldwide. The film earned \$203 million on an estimated production budget of \$66 million. It performed particularly well in China, bagging about \$65 million.

The films play off the wildly popular videogame, which has grossed more than \$4 billion in retail sales over the last two decades. The gamemaker plans to release new "Speed" console and mobile games this year.

"We are excited to work with EA, one of the world's most recognized creative companies," said Yin Cao, chairman of China Movie Channel. "We are also delighted that much of *'Need for Speed 2'* would be filmed in China, and we believe it will include much more Chinese talent and elements."

Jiaflix president Marc Ganis predicted the launch of "one of the next great franchises for movie fans around the world." His company was founded by Ganis, Kenneth Huang and Sid Ganis, former president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences.

The third partner, 1905 Pictures Co., is a Chinese film development company that worked with Paramount on promotion and marketing of the last *"Transformers"* film, which grossed a record \$330 million in China.

As an official co-production with the Chinese companies, the film would have ready access to that frenetically-growing market. The creative team has not yet been announced. If a final deal can be struck, production would begin later this year. UTA represents the Chinese partners and Electronic Arts.